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ABSTRACT

A large discrepancy exits between the number of women obtaining certificates in educational administration and the number of women actually employed as school administrators. This paper presents findings of a study that examined career choices made by women with credentials in educational administration and their motives for those choices. Questionnaires were mailed to 480 women nationwide with principalship certification. The respondents were divided into four subgroups: (1) current principals; (2) former principals; (3) those women seeking to become employed as principals; and (4) those who never sought the position. The women's personality characteristics were compared using selected scales from the California Psychological Inventory. Findings indicate that women have actively chosen to seek--or not to seek--principalships, rather than reacting solely to structural barriers. Although the women in each group were aware of such obstacles, they did not perceive the barriers as insurmountable. They encouraged an action-oriented, self-initiated approach to seeking leadership positions in educational administration. Most of the women reported that they filled several roles at once and led careers characterized by upward movement through several positions. One figure is included. (LMI)

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ED 376 601

Is A Woman's Place Only In The Classroom?

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IS A WOMAN'S PLACE ONLY IN THE CLASSROOM?

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Current Status in Employment and Training

Early in the 1980s, the media highlighted a new phenomenon: women's marked *progress* into occupations traditionally reserved for men. By 1993, the media were ready to hail the "Year of the Woman." Front-page stories in leading newspapers announced women's advancement as politicians, executives, lawyers, pharmacists, veterinarians, bartenders, bus drivers, and bakers. But closer inspection of the overall data suggests that media accounts were exaggerated - women represent a small number of the detailed occupations for which the Census Bureau collects data, and women have even lost ground in a few occupations (Aburdene and Naisbitt, 1992).

The issue underlying these news stories and census data stems from the segregation of the sexes into different lines of work. Occupational sex segregation is one of the most enduring features of the U.S. labor market. Rigorous examination of Census Bureau data confirms substantial differentiation by sex existing at the level of aggregated occupational categories.

Nowhere is this segregation more apparent as in the field of education. Although women historically have been well-represented in the teaching profession, they have been notably under-represented in the administrative hierarchy. Throughout the United States, women comprise 66 percent of classroom teachers, 83 percent of the elementary school teachers and 46 percent of secondary teachers. In contrast, an extremely small number of administrative positions in public schools are held by women; only 11 percent of principals are women. In the higher levels of educational administration, women hold only three percent of the public school superintendencies (U.S. Department of Education, 1990).

Interestingly, many women are acquiring the appropriate educational credentials for certification in educational administration. In 1990, over 40 percent of the doctoral degrees and 51 percent of the masters degrees were earned by women. A recent survey of women teachers showed over 50 percent of them indicated an interest in pursuing graduate study in educational administration.

Even so, a large discrepancy exists between the number of women obtaining certificates in educational administration and the number of women actually employed as school administrators. The most recent estimates suggest that over 45 percent of all educational administration graduates are women but only approximately 10 percent of current administrative positions are held by women. Although comprehensive data for all levels of administrative positions will not be collected and reported by the federal government until the end of 1994, preliminary analyses show a decline in the percentage of women holding top-level, line administrative positions. Thus, despite the high percentage of women enrolled in graduate programs, or who have graduated and obtained administrative certificates, concern exists as to whether women administrators will increase in representation as positions are filled in the 1990s.

Method Used in Study

The lack of presence of women in administrative roles has been studied with regard to dimensions such as sex-role stereotyping, mobility factors, educational background, work/leadership experience, career paths, and career aspirations. These factors have been identified as barriers which deny women access to formal leadership roles.

One alternative - choice behavior - has not been sufficiently considered. It is this choice behavior that was the focus of the present study.

The present study obtained data about career choices which women with credentials in educational administration are making and information as to why they are making these choices. The following questions were considered:

1. What demographic factors are associated with groups of women certified in educational administration who have made different career choices?

2. What factors in early childhood, adolescence, college, early career years, and mature career years influence these women to seek (or not to seek) administrative positions?

3. What personality traits (e.g., dominance) are associated with their career choices?

4. What factors do these groups of women consider as primary dimensions affecting their respective career choices?

5. Can this information differentially distinguish between groups of women certified in educational administration who have made different career choices?

Data Source

Subjects: A national sample of women with minimum certification as principals from nine geographic regions were subjects for this study; the principalship is the entry-level certificate for individuals interested in line positions in educational administration. A randomly selected group of 480 women was selected (every ninth "female name" from the list of approximately 4,000 individuals with principalship certification).

Materials and Procedures

This study consisted of two parts:

Part I: A questionnaire was mailed to the sample selected to gather: a) standard demographic information; b) background on personal and family life; c) career paths; d) specifics of personal and professional career choices; and e) relevant factors affecting career choices.

Part II: The respondents to the questionnaire in Part I were divided into four subgroups: a) those women currently employed as principals; b) those women formerly, but not currently, employed as principals; c) those women attempting to become employed as principals; and d) those women who have never sought to become principals. Personality characteristics of the women in the four subgroups were compared using selected scales from the California Psychological Inventory - Dominance, Achievement via Conformance, Achievement via Independence, and Managerial Potential. A narrative elaboration of their choices on the original questionnaire was likewise sought from women in each of the four subgroups. Responding to a prompt concerning advice given to a young woman aspirant in educational administration, these women expressed personal feelings about such issues as the acceptance of women administrators, their perceptions of barriers to women aspiring to positions in educational administration, and their beliefs concerning a future for women in educational administration. The personal nature of these responses further illuminated the choices the respondents, themselves, were making regarding seeking principalships. These women described how they arrived at their decisions with regard to pursuing principalships and the relative importance of identified critical factors to this decision.

Results of the Study

Phase I

The women in this study were strikingly homogeneous in such demographic factors as age, education, marital status, and number and ages of children. The median respondent was 43 years old, married and had two children, the youngest of which was a teenager. The findings also showed these women to be well-educated and to possess numerous degrees and/or credentials in educational administration. Fully 98 percent of these women had earned a masters degree or higher in educational administration; 48 percent of the total sample had earned an advanced degree (e.g., doctorate) beyond the masters degree.

Although they had held their principalship certificates for an average of nearly eight years, these women had held their current positions on average less than five years. Seemingly, these women were securing their certificates well in advance of actually seeking and/or obtaining positions in administration. Additionally, those women who had never sought principalships significantly ($X^2 = 22.29$, df = 6, $p < .01$) more often than the other women sought other administrative degrees and certificates (e.g., director of special education). Despite having earned advanced degrees in educational administration and obtained requisite certification as principals, however, a number of the women in this study had clearly chosen other positions in education, most often involving administrative/staff responsibilities rather than principalships.

According to current theories [e.g., Gaertner (1981), Stockard and Kempner (1981), and Ortiz (1982)], the three most common specific career paths for women to enter school administration are through specialist positions, supervisory posts, and elementary principalships. In the present study, 57 percent of the women described their current positions as administrative ones (e.g., director of special education) and an additional 18 percent felt they were employed in staff positions (e.g., curriculum supervisor). Thus, using the above generic definition of "school administration" (i.e., specialists, supervisors, and principals), fully 75 percent of the women in the present study currently held administrative positions.

Some researchers describe women in education as having "disposable" careers - careers which can be "set aside" when family responsibilities are paramount (Kerr, 1985). Cook (1977) and Hall (1974) likewise found most women's reasons for working were contingent on their roles as wives and mothers, thus making it difficult for women to make lifelong commitments to careers. The women in the present study, in fact, had been employed continuously. The majority of these women indicated they had not interrupted their careers for reasons such as family matters or education, despite being well-educated wives and mothers. When asked to describe themselves, fully 86 percent of the women offered they were "career women," and only 26 percent suggested they would put aside their careers if family or personal demands arose. Continuous employment, the demonstration of commitment through lack of interruption, is an essential component in several theorists' (e.g., Bledstein, 1976) definitions of "career." Therefore, these women were career women by definition and their own descriptions.

The process of applying for principalships illuminated other realities in the "career paths" of these women. While those women who had made career decisions to become principals did not ascribe their success in this process to "good fortune" (Baltzell and Dentler, 1983), 49 percent did indicate they were simply promoted from within their school systems or were asked to apply. This finding was consistent with other studies which found that women were "sought after" for administrative appointments (e.g., Fransher and Buxton, 1980; Jackson, 1981). Additionally, however, current and former principals reported 93 percent and 100 percent success rates, respectively, in earning interviews following making written applications for principalships. In over half of the cases, they were offered the positions. Interestingly, the seekers had been

interviewed only 56 percent of the time and, in a slim 2 percent of the cases, had been offered positions. The women who had never sought principalships reported they had not engaged in this application process because they enjoyed their present positions and felt they could have a greater impact on education in positions other than as principals. Clearly, three realities (in terms of the application process for principalships) existed for the women in this study: 1) women desiring principalships who were asked to apply for these positions got hired; 2) "something" prevented the seekers from being as successful as the current and former principals in both garnering interviews and job offers; and 3) women who had never sought principalships had actively chosen not to apply for principalships but rather to seek alternative positions.

As mentioned earlier, the majority of the women who had never sought principalships were currently employed in administrative or staff positions rather than in classrooms. This finding runs counter to research (e.g., Biklen, 1985) which suggests female teachers want to remain in instructional settings, namely classrooms, rather than move into "administrative" positions. This group of women felt "being a principal removed a woman from the instruction of students" yet they obtained principalship certificates in order "to make a difference in education." Apparently, "making that difference" meant moving out of classrooms and into administrative or staff positions other than principalships.

Overall, the women in the present study became interested in educational administration after entering teaching, as other studies have found (e.g., Jackson, 1981). Their decisions to obtain principalship certificates were active career decisions encouraged by others. This latter finding would apparently suggest the importance of "support" for women in the determination of whether or not they obtain administrative credentials.

The women in this study did not identify any particular professional support structure or network to which they turned to discuss development of their careers and aspirations. Although the respondents did identify a wide range of support structures, particularly from their spouses, the lack of a specific professional support structure contradicts, in part, the support system implied by the current and former principals' reports of obtaining their principalships because they were promoted within their districts or were asked to apply for the positions. Being promoted or asked to apply for positions could imply an underlying professional support system; however, the women in the present study apparently did not perceive it in this fashion.

Additionally, the present findings did not support studies (e.g., Marshall, 1979) which indicate women, lacking support within their working environments, look to university faculties for sponsorship. In the present study, only 13 percent of the women identified university faculty members as a source of support for their careers. About one-third of the women in the present study indicated a willingness to relocate for comparable positions; forty percent were willing to move for better positions.

Interestingly, women seeking principalships were significantly more reluctant to relocate for either of the positions ($X_2 = 27.31$, df = 15, $p < .03$). In reality though most women, whatever their current positions, viewed it as unlikely they would leave their current positions during the next five years. Similarly, 50 percent felt it unlikely they would move up the career ladder in educational administration within the next five years. Not surprisingly, those women seeking principalships, significantly more than the other groups ($F = 14.94$, df = 3.187, $p < .001$), felt they would be leaving their current positions for other positions within their current districts.

The conventional, potential barriers to women seeking principalships were generally acknowledged by the aggregate sample of women though they did not emphasize them as insurmountable obstacles. Although many barriers were identified by the respondents, only two major concerns were viewed as most important by over 50 percent of the women: a) demands

made on a principal's after-school hours are excessive and b) male administrators tend to hire other male administrators. The latter concern is consistent with other studies (e.g., Fishel and Pottker, 1975; Taylor, 1977) which have shown that opportunities for women to pursue administrative positions are limited because of a hiring bias favoring men over women. The barriers seen as least important, however, included lower career advancement aspirations in females (Shea, 1984); females' lack of male socialization experiences (Valverde, 1980); and fear of being perceived as the "token" female in the position (Kanter, 1977).

These women also expressed concern for the problems arising for women in principalships (e.g., "Women in principalships must deal with more problems than men in the same positions.") more than about the position of the principal itself. However, none of the women's concerns were related to the specific choice concerning seeking a principalship; they seemingly reflected special issues (e.g., being excluded from informal social experiences with other male administrators) with which a female principal must cope.

In general, then, Phase I examined factors which were potentially relevant regarding why women, certified as principals, have made different choices concerning seeking principalships. The women showed remarkable similarity in demographic and behavioral characteristics and in attitudes and perceptions of themselves, their careers. and the position of the principal. Exceptions to this homogeneity most frequently occurred among women seeking principalships.

Phase II

Personality Factors

As a group, the respondents scored extremely high on all four California Personality Inventory (CPI) scales compared to the CPI normative group. For the aggregate group, the median value exceeded the 72nd percentile on all four scales (Ai median = 72nd percentile, Mp median = 76th percentile, Do median = 81st percentile, and Ac median = 92nd percentile). Clearly, women certified as principals are high in terms of the attributes measured by these scales, which measure characteristics related to independence, achievement, and taking an active role in one's life.

Analysis of variance compared the groups on each of the CPI scales. No significant differences between the four status groups of women were found on three of the four scales [i.e., Ai ($F = .26$, $df = 3,101$, n.s.); Do ($F = 2.56$, $df = 3,101$, n.s.); and Mp ($F = 13$, $df = 3,101$, n.s.)]. However, on the Achievement via Conformance scale a significant difference was found [Ac ($F = 3.28$, $df = 3,101$, $p < .02$)]. A post-hoc Scheffe procedure indicated current principals scored higher than those women seeking principalships.

To assess further possible differences, a series of t-tests compared all pairs of the four status groups of women on the Achievement via Conformance scale. Again, women currently employed as principals were higher on the Ac scale than those women seeking principalships ($t = 3.73$, $df = 48.31$, $p < .001$). Additionally, the former principals showed significantly higher Ac scale scores than those women seeking principalships ($t = 2.17$, $df = 49.45$, $p < .04$).

Because the differences on the CPI Dominance scale across the four status groups of women approached significance ($p < .0589$), a series of t-tests were conducted to assess differences between pairs of the four status groups of women on this scale. As was true for the Ac scale, those women currently employed as principals had significantly higher scores on the Dominance scale than those women who were seeking principalships ($t = 2.50$, $df = 53$, $p < .02$).

No other significant differences between pairs of the four status groups on the other two scales (Ai and Mp) were indicated either by analysis of variance or through examination by t-tests.

Advice to a Young Woman Prompt

General Comments

To discuss meaningfully the differences between the responses of the different status groups and/or the differences within a category of responses among the different status groups, some general observations should first be made about the responses from the aggregate group.

None of the women limited all six pieces of advice to a central theme. The largest category of responses emphasized the theme "What to Do to Be a Principal" despite the fact the open-ended question asked for advice for a young woman considering a career in educational administration (see Figure 1). Nearly an equal number of responses occurred in the two derivative subcategories ("What to Do to Prepare to Be a Principal" and "What to Do to Keep a Principalship").

Not surprisingly, therefore, the subgroups with the most responses were in "What to Do to Be a Principal." Managing personal time, forming a support network, becoming educated, and gathering instructional experiences to prepare for the principalship were mentioned in some fashion by nearly every respondent. Similarly, managing work time, forming a professional network, promoting participatory management, and exhibiting specific behaviors (e.g., risk-taking, change agent) to keep a principalship were mentioned by a majority of the women.

Within the large group of responses for each of the three major categories of responses, nearly every woman offered more than one piece of advice; analysis for possible duplication did not seem fruitful. However, within the smaller divisions (i.e., primary themes and other included terms), little repetition of responses occurred. Less than 5 percent of the responses at this level were duplicates (i.e., offered by a single woman within a specific subgroup of analysis); further, on only three occasions did one woman supply three or more responses grouped under a single theme or subgroup.

Three observations seem particularly germane regarding the overall tone of the responses. First, within each of the three semantic categories of advice could be found an undercurrent of comparisons between men and women and/or a reference to the "male model of administration." Respondents told the young woman in order to successfully obtain a principalship she would need to "dress professionally - wear a suit" and to "know the degree to which he (in this case a reference to a superintendent) will back you, a woman." When telling the young woman who she should be, respondents reminded her, for example, an "indecisive female administrator is criticized much more than an indecisive male peer" and she should not "try to be and/or act like a man." Additionally, two subgroups of responses - "wearing your sex on your sleeve" and "mentally preparing to deal with male models in administration" - were found within the large group of "What to Do to Be a Principal."

The second pattern was formed by the significant number of responses concerned with telling the young woman what **not** to do rather than being more encouraging of proactive behaviors. For example, the young woman was told:

> "Don't neglect your home life...";
> "Don't try to act like a man...";
> "Don't be afraid...";
> "Don't try so hard...";
> "Don't underestimate...";

Figure 1

Taxonomy of Advice to a Young Woman Aspirant

ADVICE TO A YOUNG WOMAN ASPIRANT				
	HOW TO OBTAIN?			Physical appearance Availability Relocation Selection Other
	WHO TO BE?		Be yourself	Yourself Self-belief
			Model someone else's behavior	Toughness Virtues Flexibility Goal-orientation Love Sense of humor Balance Positive attitude
	WHAT TO DO TO BE?	WHAT TO DO TO PREPARE?	Get help from others	Internship Mentor Network
			Get experience	Leadership opportunities Instructional experiences: a. Variety in situation b. Variety in content
			Get educated	College/graduate school Specific courses Research
			Get skilled	Time management Decision-making Human relations
			Be introspective	Soul-searching Mental preparation to deal with men
		WHAT TO DO TO KEEP?	Satisfy the faculty and staff	Team management Visibility
				Public relations
			Satisfy the community	Principal behavior Commitment to children
			Satisfy yourself	Personal life Sensitivity to stereotypes Professional network Professional time management Self-talk Women principals

"Don't expect a lot of praise...";
"Don't work 16 hours a day...";
"Never compromise...";
"Never become 'macho'...";
"Do not allow...";
"Don't wear...";
"Never buck the system..."; and
"Never give up..."

all within one category of responses! These negatives were uniformly of a cautionary type but almost always were simultaneously yoked to an exhortation toward positive action. It was as though the respondents felt a particular need to give advice which emphasized careful and deliberate action.

Lastly, one-quarter of the responses suggested "negative" aspects associated with, in general, being a principal, and, specifically, being a woman in the principalship. In addition to negative comparisons between male and female administrators and to cautions of "what not to do" (as discussed above), the job of a principal was described as being "lonely;" demanding "long hours" and "lots of stamina;" supplanting "personal time," "family time," and "any hope of free time;" requiring "great personal and professional sacrifices;" and producing "headaches" and "health problems." Though these were not presented by the respondents as barriers to women, respondents clearly felt obligated to highlight potentially negative factors which impinge on a woman's decision to seek a principalship.

Comments Reflecting Status Group Membership

Two types of comparison were pertinent: 1) examining the categories of "kinds of advice" associated with status group membership and 2) examining each status group for typical/ predominant patterns and/or kinds of responses.

Within the categories, only a few pertinent contributions could be attributed clearly to any one of the status groups. On "How to Obtain a Principalship," no single group of respondents predominated in the frequency of advice given. In the advice on "Who to Be," only two groupings under "model someone else's behaviors" were clearly identified with a status group. Current principals emphasized advice to be tough-minded and to be goal-directed. Interestingly, former principals had little use for the entire category of "modeling someone else's behavior;" frequently, a subgroup of responses under this category would have no entries from former principals.

Within the category of "What to Do to Be a Principal," five themes and subgroups were identified with particular status groups and one where the absence of a status group was significant. The respondents who had never sought principalships accounted for proportionately more responses in the area of "developing specific skills" (especially in the area of human relations skills) to prepare to be a principal than did the other three status groups. Women who had never sought principalships also accounted for over one-third of the responses in two themes under "What to Do to Keep a Principalship:" 1) "satisfy the community" and 2) "satisfy the faculty and staff." Clearly, the human relations/public relations and participatory management aspects of a principal's job are particularly important to these women, perhaps reflecting that they have chosen to continue to be part of the constituency for which principals have supervisory responsibilities.

Current principals emphasized two themes under the rubric of "What to Do to Keep a Principalship." These women supplied 40 percent of the pieces of advice in the discrete subgroup of responses on "public relations" (one of two subgroups through which a principal could work to satisfy both the community and the staff; not to be confused with the human relations/public

relations mentioned in the paragraph above). Additionally, these women supported "finding a professional network" in which to "talk over problems" or to "seek another opinion" to keep a principalship. (Interestingly, these same women did not endorse the idea of finding a network of people to prepare to be a principal.) Neither of these two findings could be attributed to having had the experience as a principal, however. Just five former principals supported the importance of public relations skills (as defined in this study) and only two of them felt it was necessary to be part of a professional network.

An under-representation that was striking was within the subgroup of "instructional experiences." Only two former principals endorsed any instructional experiences as necessary to be a principal while over one-third of the respondents in each of the other three status groups thought both kinds (variety in content and in situation) of instructional experiences were important.

The category of "What to Do to Be a Principal" revealed that few subgroups actually could be identified with particular status groups, despite the large number of responses in this category. However, when the two status groups who had experienced the principalship (current and former principals) were compared to those who had not (women who were seeking and women who had never sought principalships), differences in such areas as attitudes toward mentorships and support groups (discussed below) were noted. This discovery prompted a renewed look at the two other large categories of responses and a more in-depth look at the category of "What to Do to Be a Principal."

Comments Reflecting Experience

Pooling the status groups into "experienced" and "non-experienced" groups provided a more meaningful "unit of analysis" for the larger, inclusive categories of responses. By using experience rather than group membership, the differences in the larger semantic groups of responses became more evident. An overwhelming preponderance of the advice on how to obtain a principalship came from those respondents who had not held a principalship (who were seeking or who had never sought principalships). These two groups of respondents obviously more closely identified with these job-seeking behaviors than those respondents who already worked in or had left principalships. For the experienced group, the notion of applying for principalships was, understandably, removed from their immediate concerns.

Similarly, the "non-experienced" respondents (the combination of those respondents who were seeking and those who had never sought principalships) provided proportionately more responses in the subcategory of "What to Do to Prepare to Be a Principal" than those respondents with experience in the principalship. Closer examination provided striking examples of why the difference between the two "experience" groups was so great. One-half and one-third, respectively, of the respondents without principalship experiences endorsed "finding a mentor" and "building a network" while less than one-tenth of the former principals and only two current principals thought either of those two suggestions was important. Likewise, only six respondents in the "experienced" group asked the young woman to look within herself to see if she were mentally prepared to assume the responsibilities of a principal in contrast to 17 respondents in the group without principalship experience.

For the "experienced" group, it was much more often important for a woman to "be herself" and to "believe in herself" to become a principal than it was for those respondents without principalship experience. Nearly twice as many current and former principals than the other two groups combined provided responses supporting these general themes. Not surprisingly, the "experienced" respondents also endorsed the necessity of "satisfying yourself" in order to keep a principalship, with current and former principals accounting for nearly 70 percent of the responses.

Changing the focus of analysis from looking within the categories of responses to looking within each status group for typical/predominant patterns and/or kinds of responses reflected many of the findings discussed above. Of the status groups, those women who had never sought principalships were the most "uniform" in their advice; they reiterated "textbook" advice or responded to a stereotype of women principals, an approach which was not supported by the experiences of the current and former principals. Three-fourths of those women who had never sought principalships offered at least one response for "satisfying the community and/or the staff" to keep a principalship and suggested the need for serious introspection in order to prepare for a principalship. Current principals discussed ways to keep a principalship and rarely mentioned job-seeking strategies. Former principals were more difficult to characterize as they were most frequently conspicuous by their absence (see previous discussions of acquiring instructional experiences and developing a professional network as examples). Those women seeking principalships were understandably preoccupied with behaviors to obtain a principalship (i.e., job-seeking advice) and less inclined to discuss what to do to keep a principalship.

Comments Reflecting Content

As a group, neither the aggregate sample nor any of the status groups emphasized barriers to women in their advice. Though they clearly recognized barriers frequently exist, the respondents treated such barriers as problems to be solved not as insurmountable obstacles. As such, then, barriers were simply a part of the context for women principals. It is noteworthy, none of the respondents directly attempted to discourage the young woman from seeking a position in educational administration. The respondents did, however, admonish her about "what not to do" but, seemingly, this advice was to prevent the young woman from doing something which would "sabotage" her career or her happiness. Not surprisingly, the respondents focused on their (e.g., current principal, former principal) particular view of the task (seeking a principalship) as most significant in their advice to the young aspirant.

Overall, current and former principals were more practical (e.g., "Seek other opinions when making tough decisions.") in their advice than was the inexperienced group (most notably those seeking principalships). Understandably, the experienced group placed less emphasis on such activities as those necessary for obtaining a principalship. Additionally, the experienced group better understood the importance of particular forces (e.g., community groups) which affect the principalship and offered a view of the principal's role as one of continually balancing various constituents (e.g., community, staff). Interestingly (and perhaps reflecting the paucity of women in similar positions), this group suggested a woman principal generally "goes it alone" (e.g., "It's lonely at the top.") and encouraged the young woman to become self-reliant (e.g., "Believe in yourself. You'll need it when the going gets rough."). Other comments made by this group (e.g., "Never buck the system until you have secured an administrative position and then only with caution." and "See self as a change agent in administration not necessarily a bulldozer but a flowing water stream.") suggest self-reliance would also serve the woman principal well when she found the conventional rules of school organizations difficult.

Lack of experience in the principalship was more often associated with an expressed need for support through a mentor or a network to seek and obtain a principalship. Whether they had been unsuccessful in obtaining principalships or had not yet been convinced principalships were positions for them, these women had clearly come to believe women need to attach themselves to mentors in order to "make it." Similarly, these respondents emphasized a need for human relations skills, team-building, and shared decision-making.

Women who had never sought principalships were particularly concerned that principals foster cooperative team efforts and become "educational leaders" within their buildings. The advice from women who had never sought principalships generally was concomitant with

emerging models of the principalship presented in current textbooks and journal articles (e.g., Sweeney, 1982). This group was also particularly introspective concerning the cost-benefit aspects of becoming principals; as individuals, they had clearly chosen alternatives to becoming principals.

Women seeking principalships similarly reflected current educational administration/ management theory, apparently learned in their recent graduate programs. As a group, their advice was more idealistic [e.g., "You must get along with everyone (even if you detest them)."] and more optimistically supportive of women (e.g., "Women in the principalship role are accepted in communities - women tend to be more effective."). As was expected, women seeking principalships focused particularly on actual job-seeking behaviors and those behaviors which, seemingly, got a woman candidate/aspirant noticed (e.g., "Start going to all committee meetings.").

Collectively, many respondents acknowledged that obtaining acceptance as a principal depended on a woman acting a "certain way." Whether the woman was enjoined "To realize that, as a principal, she will not be judged by the same standards as men in the field...however, she should not be intimidated by this." or "Women principals have to prove more in longer strides than men in a community where people are not used to women being in leadership." it was important she understood being a principal was difficult and, clearly, more complex if one were female. This advice did not imply there were external barriers for women (e.g., discrimination), per se, but rather that certain "appropriate" role-specific behaviors were necessary for women principals. Their recommendations further suggested the institutional arrangements (e.g., men predominating in authority positions) surrounding women principals were unlikely to change in the near future and a women should therefore accommodate by "acting a certain way."

Current and former principals, particularly, offered advice suggesting women in leadership roles must "have a mission...want to bring about change in how we educate children." Women administrators were advised to set a new standard of administrative practices which was unlike the administrative style used by men, "Don't attempt to take on masculine-type leadership characteristics." While these women did not completely articulate a "female" model of educational administration, they did identify elements (e.g., emphasizes human relations skills, builds "community" through communication) increasingly associated with the way women manage schools (e.g., Shakeshaft, 1986).

Discussion

This section seeks to place the present study in the context of other studies done on the impact of barriers to women in educational administration and to identify parameters and personality traits associated with the different subgroups of women (see research questions #3 and #4). As this was an exploratory study, this section also discusses the relevancy for women in this age group of the currents of Western culture and the impact of the current lack of recognizable career paths for women leading to positions in educational administration (information stemming from both Phase I and Phase II of this study).

Choice Versus Barriers

Ironically, despite the diminishing number of women in educational administration positions and despite the reputed obstacles for women administrators identified in previous research, women are increasingly seeking credentials in educational administration. Prior research has sought to identify barriers or other structural reasons why women are not in administrative positions rather than exploring the possibility women are not engaging in these particular activities (i.e., seeking positions in educational administration) as a matter of choice.

The present study indicates women have chosen to seek - or not to seek - principalships as active processes rather than as reactions to structural and/or external barriers entirely. Even though all of the respondents have essentially similar credentials (certification as principals), they have chosen different career alternatives in which to practice "their administrative skills." And, they can readily describe (and in some cases defend) why they have currently chosen to position themselves into the four different categories (i.e., current, former, seeker, or never sought).

These women did, however, acknowledge conventional barriers and/or negative factors impacting women seeking principalships, particularly because the questionnaire prompted them to consider all of the major socio-cultural, attitudinal, and psychological barriers identified in previous research. However, no matter what career choices they had currently made regarding seeking principalships, these women did not present these barriers as insurmountable and, in some cases (e.g., "Most communities around where I live would not have as much confidence in a woman principal as they would a man principal.") showed little concern (i.e., over 70 percent disagreed with this barrier). Other barriers seen as less important included such factors as discrimination against women, lack of social approval, lack of self-confidence, and fear of success as mitigating their decisions to seek principalships.

The advice to a young woman also included aspects of some of the barriers mentioned above. However, in their narrative responses, these women were even more encouraging of an action-oriented, self-initiated approach to seeking principalships. These women assumed that a woman is responsible for her own career directions and advised the imaginary female colleague how she should go about becoming a principal. Several women actively encouraged the young woman simply to go ahead and become a principal - "The field is wide open." Additionally, these women offered they themselves had pursued their academic credentials to become principals "with an eye to the future." They had acquired their certification as principals because they wished to seek an administrative position.

To be certain, as Jones and Montenegro (1982) noted, some women learn about the system in educational administration and chose to pursue careers elsewhere. This could be the circumstance for women who have never sought principalships; the majority of these women were in non-line administrative positions (e.g., athletic director) and/or staff positions (e.g., curriculum coordinator). In contrast, however, the actual experience of being principals seemed to have provided some women with important information about the educational administration system different from the "messages"' they may have gotten elsewhere (e.g., the "managerial" metaphor so often used in educational administration graduate courses). Current principals did not indicate they planned to leave their principalships in the next five years; former principals generally had chosen to remain in administration (e.g., superintendents), a choice which would presuppose an adequate level of comfort (and enjoyment) in being an administrator.

Differential Factors

Having experienced the principalship as a current or former principal, however, clearly was not the all-important variable. Indeed, despite the sample's overall homogeneity, women seeking principalships seemed to differ from the current and former principals on several other demographic and "advice" variables. And, the women seeking principalships also differed from those women who had never sought principalships.

Areas such as number of job offers, length of certification, and professional background distinguished women seeking principalships from the other status groups. Unlike the other respondents, those women seeking principalships were relatively recently certified in educational administration; they had only recently ($\bar{X}$ = 2.94 years) completed their requirements for

certification. A longitudinal study of these women would be most appropriate since most of the women in the other status groups waited three years in order to seek or be appointed to their first principalships.

An interesting contrast, however, emerged in that the current and former principals and those women who had never sought principalships had entered the field of educational administration several years earlier than those women currently seeking principalships. They became graduate students at a time when fewer women enrolled in such programs (U.S. Department of Education, 1987). Of potential relevance, therefore, is the observation these women were enrolled in graduate classes clearly dominated by men (U.S. Department of Education, 1987) and, in essence, "had to make their own way." They relied less on sponsorship, achieved through conformance, and competed against men (by their own report) to a greater degree than those women seeking principalships. Most of their courses were taught by male professors (U.S. Department of Education, 1987) who, no doubt, adhered to the "business management" model of administration even more prevalent at that time [which, as discussed above in the study by Jones and Montenegro (1982), was the deciding factor for some of these women to choose not to seek principalships]. For those women who chose to seek principalships, perhaps this sense of "I can do it on my own" coupled with the ability to conform with the "expectations" of those individuals hiring principals (i.e., the ability to manage a school) apparently was important in their obtaining principalships.

The seekers, on the other hand, felt a greater need to have someone "help them" and scored lower on Achievement via Conformance. They have been modestly successful in getting interviews but have been unsuccessful in having these interviews result in job offers. A possible interpretation is the influx of women into educational administration graduate programs (U.S. Department of Education, 1987) has changed the dynamics of the classes, and the classes now emphasize working in a collaborative "team/supportive" atmosphere and "under-emphasize" the competitive, hierarchical organizational pattern of most current school systems. Likewise, these graduate students are being exposed to the recent efforts at school restructuring and current research in effective schools.

Additionally, more (although clearly not a majority) graduate educational administration classes are being taught by female professors (U.S. Department of Education, 1987). The "female model" of educational administration appears to be the prevailing one in many such classrooms and is exemplified in such apparently typical course listings as:

> **Survival Skills for Women in Leadership**
>
> July 9-12 (Monday-Thursday), 8:00 am-1:00 pm
>
> Beavercreek High School
>
> ED 670, Section A84, 2 graduate credit hours
>
> $190 (includes $10 lab fee)
>
> This course will address the following skills needed by women who assume leadership positions: mentoring, networking, team building, problem-solving, group dynamics, supervisory skills and communication skills.
>
> (Wright State University, Summer Quarter 1990 Bulletin)

Those individuals who hire principals, however, are frequently not aware of such areas as the research on effective schools, the usage of collaborative decision-making, mentoring, and networking skills advocated for women (see above). Most school board members (personal communication with Patty Bruce Mitchell, National School Boards Association, June 1990) cling to the "managerial metaphor" for school administration. Thus, the newly certified administrators

among the seekers may not be seen as"principal material" and may well appear to be "ineffective, indecisive, and weak" candidates when discussing their collaborative, educational leader approach to administration (Marshall and Heller, 1983).

Women who had never sought principalships did differ from the other groups whenever the question or comment linked administration with the educational purpose of the schools. Studies of career motivation of teachers consistently demonstrate women enter the field of education to teach, to be close to children, and to be able to make a difference (e.g., Intriligator, 1983). Offers of more money or potential upward mobility on a career ladder, which seemingly remove women from the instructional purpose of the schools, may be ineffective ways to motivate women to seek administrative positions.

In the present study, women who had never sought principalships strongly agreed administration removes a woman from the important purpose of the school, the instruction of students. The continued structuring of schools and courses in educational administration which disassociate administrative jobs from the task of learning almost ensures many women will opt out of administration. Those women who have trained as instructional leaders but who are currently seeking administrative positions other than that of principal are clearly results of such school structures. As Intriligator (1983) noted, women seek leadership roles in schools which do not take them away from teaching and educational/instructional decisions. But, until research on effective schools and site-based management, for example, reaches a broader audience (e.g., school committee members), the number of such "attractive" opportunities for women will be limited.

Currents of Western Culture

The currents of Western culture appear relevant, especially given the homogeneity of the women in this sample. Women in this study, as well as other women certified in educational administration, are "caught" in a time of personal and professional transformation. They came of age when the women's movement is/was in full force, and the conflict between marriage/family and career still requires a serious transformational effort (a theme in their advice to a young woman aspirant). The majority of these women have questioned or rejected the conventional roles for women and have begun to search for new roles. However, the new roles are unclear and only generalized conceptions exist of what these new roles might be. Only the former principals had begun, it appeared, to "come to grips" with what these new roles might mean.

Most of the women reported being engaged in a series of "veers and tacks" (Aisenberg and Harrington, 1988) which could serve several purposes at once. Many respondents, for example, detailed the principal's role as a facilitator at a faculty meeting (a "tack"), but, on the other hand, encouraged the young woman aspirant to "not wait to have children" (a "veer"). Since the respondents were to give advice to a young women aspirant to the principalship, these topics/ categories of advice together might seem disparate. However, they could also indicate these women's attempts to "find" new meaningful personal and professional roles. Since their advice shows varied purposes (and likely represents self-searching), their calls for action, like their advice, not surprisingly show hesitations (e.g., "Do some serious soul searching before you decide to be an administrator. Are you confident in your abilities to lead and manage a group?") and shifts in directions (e.g., "Have an alternative career in mind because it is extremely difficult to find a position in educational administration.").

It would be reasonable to assume such self-searching and changing of roles would involve internal conflict, and the conflict likely would be exacerbated because these women already were certified as principals. As Aisenberg and Harrington (1988) suggest,

> ...transformation in itself is a vital, almost magical, process of growth and change. But when this internal change in persona through learning becomes confused with the external change in status through credentialing, trouble ensues. (p. 17)

To the extent conflict exists generated by such transformational self-learning, on the one hand, and professional credentialing, on the other, there would likely be an enhanced appearance of career diffusion and of non-seriousness. Such an appearance would reinforce widely held assumptions that women are not serious about their careers. In educational administration, the dialogue could begin, once again, concerning how barriers to women holding advanced degrees in educational administration discourage them from pursuing careers in educational administration. This dialogue might obfuscate, rather than emphasize, the wealth of experience and expertise these women are gathering as they look at education from a variety of perspectives/positions (e.g., curriculum supervisor, director of special education, classroom teacher, project evaluator, etc.).

Career Paths

True, there are those who assume that women have not shown strong professional intent and capabilities in educational administration. Few women, indeed, hold educational administrative positions. But, because so few women have currently chosen to seek administrative positions, these choices neither demonstrate a lack of seriousness of their intentions nor limits to their capabilities. Perhaps this evidence (the choice of alternative careers within or outside of education) has been misperceived.

In their career paths, the women in this study previously had held a variety of positions (e.g., athletic director, women's dean); this was particularly true of the current and former principals and those women who had never sought principalships. While the largest proportion of the total respondents (30%) had been elementary teachers in the position previous to their current one, this percentage was inflated because 50 percent of those women seeking principalships are currently elementary teachers and were also in their previous positions. By contrast, only 39 percent of the current principals had been elementary teachers in their previous job. Women who had never sought principalships were far more likely to have held a staff/administrative position (32%) or secondary teaching position (26%) previously.

Certainly, little research on the career paths of women in administration has been undertaken (Shakeshaft, 1986). The present study suggests it would be particularly difficult to describe a typical career path of these women. The respondents had held a variety of different jobs prior to their current ones (the majority of the women listed several jobs even though the question asked for only the jobs immediately prior to their current ones). While this "sequence of different jobs" failed to illuminate a specific career path for women interested in educational administration; it did, however, support the notion these women have careers characterized by upward movement through several positions (Bledstein, 1976; Carlson and Schmuck, 1981; Lortie, 1975) rather than "semi-careers" in which they stayed in one position for the greater part of their work lives (Lortie, 1975).

The study also demonstrates these women are serious about and have the capabilities to have successful careers (see comments regarding their scores on the four scales on the California Personality Inventory in Phase II). Many of the women have pursued advanced degrees in the field of educational administration (e.g., doctoral degrees), all have been employed continuously and in at least one other position, and several have demonstrated their serious intentions and commitments to the field by becoming superintendents.

> In March 1988, I became totally disgusted with the way the school system was being run and had not been able to change it from within (*she had been a teacher*). We had a

system-wide case of "Who Cares." At that time, I qualified for the superintendent's election (*she held her doctorate in educational administration*) and ran against the incumbent and the former superintendent. When the votes were counted, I had 72% of the total vote and there was not one word said during the campaign that I was a woman.

Educational Importance of Study

This study on the career choices of women certified in educational administration compellingly supports the importance of choice behavior. If women are to be included more in educational administration positions, then the present results have major implications for training women in educational administration, as well as for recruiting practices. The training and recruitment of women for principalships is particularly important in anticipation of the surge of openings projected for the mid-1990s and the call for a "new vision" of leadership in our schools as our country moves toward the 21st Century.

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